Guidelines for Preparing Applications

Fiscal Year 2002

Technology Opportunities Program

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

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A. Introduction to the *Guidelines*

The *Guidelines for Preparing Applications–Fiscal Year 2002 (Guidelines)* is designed to help you address the six review criteria identified in the *Notice of Solicitation of Grant Applications (Notice)* and complete your application for the Technology Opportunities Program (TOP). Where appropriate, we have included recommendations from TOP grantees based on the lessons they have learned developing their projects. The *Guidelines* also includes pointers to online resources available through the TOP web site at http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top. If you have difficulty accessing the web site, please contact the TOP office at 202-482-2048.

The suggestions presented here are not a prescription for a successful application, nor should they be considered the only way to address the review criteria described in the *Notice*. The ultimate goal is to present your project in a clear and compelling manner with the understanding that reviewers will rate your project based on how well you address the review criteria.

As you read through the *Guidelines*, you will find that preparing a competitive TOP application involves a number of preliminary steps. Before you begin to write your Project Narrative, reviewers and TOP staff suggest that you investigate if other organizations have tried your planned approach, meet with potential end users and stakeholders to gauge their interest in your effort, and develop specific outcomes that will be used to measure your efforts. These few simple steps will improve your project planning even if you decide not to apply to TOP.

B. Application Deadline and Delivery to NTIA

Complete applications for the Fiscal Year 2002 TOP grant program must be received by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) no later than **Thursday, 8:00 P.M. EST, March 21, 2002.** When submitting your application, please keep in mind the following:

- NTIA will not accept any materials submitted after the deadline.
- NTIA will not accept amendments to an application or corrected pages sent after the deadline.
- NTIA will not accept applications or portions of applications via fax or electronic mail.
- A postmark date prior to March 21, 2002 is not sufficient to meet the deadline.

Applications that have been provided to a delivery service on or before March 20, 2002, with a guarantee that delivery will be made before 8:00 P.M. on March 21, 2002, will be accepted for review. To ensure that we accept your application, you should document that your application is provided to a delivery service that guarantees delivery prior to the closing date and time.

As stated in the *Notice*, NTIA will only consider requests to waive the deadline after the deadline has passed (i.e., March 22, 2002 and thereafter). Requests to waive the deadline will only be considered when accompanied by a complete application. Please note that requests to waive the deadline are rarely granted.

In addition, new processing procedures and increased security measures are being implemented at many mail and package handling operations. As a result, your application may take longer to arrive than you anticipate. Therefore, we urge you to allow sufficient time for the delivery of your application. We strongly suggest that you submit your application early and do not depend on last minute pick up and delivery.

Completed applications must be mailed, shipped, or sent overnight express to:

Technology Opportunities Program
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
HCHB, Room 4092
Washington, DC 20230

Or hand-delivered to:

Technology Opportunities Program
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
HCHB, Room 1874
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Room 1874 is located at entrance #10 on 15th Street NW, between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues. See the inside cover of this *Application Kit* for a detailed map for hand-deliveries.

NTIA will provide a written acknowledgment of the receipt of each application and will publish a list of applicants on the TOP web site. If you send your application by carrier, please retain a copy of your package tracking information to confirm delivery of your application and prove that the carrier received your application.

C. General Instructions for Preparing Applications

A Complete Application

An application is considered complete when it includes all the items listed on the following page. Failure to include any of the items listed at the top of the next page, with an original signature where appropriate, may result in rejection of your application.

For ease of processing, you should assemble your application in the following order:

- **Standard Form 424**, *Application for Federal Assistance* (Original signature required)
- **Executive Summary** (1 page not exceeding 350 words)
- **Project Narrative** (Up to 8 pages)
- **Appendices** (Up to 27 pages)

- **Standard Form 424A**, *Budget Information–Non-Construction Programs*
- **Budget Narrative** (No page limit)
- **Statement of Matching Funds**

- **Standard Form 424B**, *Assurances* (Original signature required)
- **Standard Form CD-511**, *Certifications* (Original signature required)
- **Standard Form LLL**, *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities*[1] (Original signature required)

Online Tools

Filling out forms and preparing budget information can be the most tedious and time consuming aspect of preparing your application. For the Fiscal Year 2002 grant round, TOP has developed a set of online tools to help you complete your Standard Form 424, Standard Form 424A, and executive summary.

Through TOP's web site at http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top, you can access online tools with self-calculating totals and pre-filled forms. It is important to remember that **the online tools are optional and not required to prepare an application**. You can still prepare a complete application using the forms from this *Application Kit*. If you need additional copies of forms or materials, you may also contact the TOP office.

If you prepare the forms online, you must print them, sign where appropriate, and include them in your application. **TOP will not accept the electronic submission of this or any other form or information**. Additional details about these tools are provided on the TOP web site, and you can contact the TOP office if you have questions.

Signatures

Original signatures are required in the following places in the application:

- Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance* **in box 18d**. If you prepare the Standard Form 424 using TOP's online tools, you must print and sign the form in the appropriate location with an original signature.

[1] You do not need to include a Standard Form LLL in your application if your organization does not lobby Congress or the federal government on behalf of your application.

- Standard Form 424B, *Assurances* **on the back page**.

- Standard Form CD-511, *Certifications* **on the back page**.

- Standard Form LLL, *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities* **at bottom of the form**, if applicable.

Standard forms 424, 424B, CD-511, and LLL should be signed by someone who is authorized to commit the applicant organization, such as the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, President, or Executive Director. Original signatures should be in **blue ink** so that the original can be easily distinguished from the copies.

It is vital that **original signatures** appear on the forms listed above. Failure to submit an application with the appropriate signatures by the application deadline may result in the application being rejected by the Department of Commerce.

Page Limits

It is important to stay within your page limits. Reviewers will be instructed to ignore any portion of your application that extends beyond the prescribed page limits.

- **Your Project Narrative must not exceed eight (8) pages**. The Project Narrative is the core component of your application. A table of contents or dividers to help organize your eight pages do not count against the 8 page limit. For suggestions on how to prepare your Project Narrative, please see page *Guidelines - 7*.

- **You may provide up to twenty-seven (27) pages of appendices**. Your appendices may include timelines, evaluation details, organizational charts, memoranda of understanding, technical designs, illustrations, maps, letters of support, résumés, supporting documents, etc. However, do not include CD-ROMs, disks, videos or audio tapes in your application.

- **Your executive summary should not exceed one (1) page or 350 words**. For suggestions on how to prepare your Executive Summary, please see *Guidelines - 6*.

Page Formats

The application should be typed, single-sided, single-spaced, on 8 ½" x 11" paper. Your text should be a font of no less than 12 points with margins of no less than one inch (1").

This sentence is in 12-point font. Do not use a font size smaller than this in your application.

You should also number the pages of your application consecutively, starting with the first page of the Project Narrative through the appendices. For ease of processing, please number the Budget Narrative and the Statement of Matching Funds separately, beginning with **424A-1**, **424A-2**, **424A-3**, etc.

Number of Copies

NTIA requests that each applicant submit **one (1) complete application with original signatures as required** and **five (5) copies**, unless doing so would present a financial hardship, in which case the applicant may submit one original and two copies of the application. The application with original signatures should be clearly marked "Original." Each duplicate should be clearly marked "Copy."

To assist in the review process, the original application (marked "Original") and one of the five copies of the application should be secured with a binder clip (see illustration to the left). The remaining four copies, which will be sent to the peer reviewers, should each be stapled.

Also, you should include the standard forms 424B, CD-511, LLL in both of the binder clipped copies. You do not need to include these forms in the four stapled reviewer copies.

Waiver Requests

As stated in the *Notice*, NTIA does not intend to waive any provisions of the *Notice*. However, under extraordinary circumstances, NTIA may, on its own initiative or when requested, waive certain provisions in the *Notice*. NTIA cannot waive requirements that are statutory, only those that are discretionary.

- **For waiver requests that DO NOT involve the March 21, 2002 deadline**, you must submit a letter explaining (1) what provision(s) you are asking to be waived and (2) the circumstances that necessitate the waiver. If you intend to submit the waiver request prior to submitting an application, you must write a letter marked "WAIVER REQUEST" and address to TOP c/o the address listed on the inside front cover of the *Application Kit*. NTIA cannot guarantee that it will be able to resolve waiver requests before the application deadline. If you intend to submit the waiver request with your application, the request must be clearly labeled as "WAIVER REQUEST" and must be attached to the front of a complete application.

- **For waiver requests that ask to waive the March 21, 2002 deadline**, you must submit a letter explaining the extraordinary circumstances that necessitate waiving the deadline. The request must be clearly labeled as "WAIVER REQUEST" and must be attached to the front of a complete application. As indicated in the *Notice*, requests to waive the application deadline will only be considered March 22, 2002 and thereafter.

Please Note: If you intend to request that NTIA provide more than 50% of the total project costs, you do not need a waiver. Instead, you must make a justification regarding the circumstances that warrant a federal share in excess of 50% of the total project costs in your Statement of Matching Funds (see page *Guidelines - 31*).

D. Instructions for Preparing the Executive Summary

Every application should begin with a concise executive summary that does **not exceed one (1) page or 350 words.**

Your executive summary should be factual, brief, and focused on your proposed efforts. The executive summary should briefly cover the core aspects of the project and should help the reader answer the following questions:

What are the goal(s) of the project?
What services will you provide through the project and to whom?
What are the anticipated outcomes and impact of the project?
How many sites are there and where are they located?
What technologies are to be employed?
What will users do with the technology?
Who are the communities to be served?
What organizations are participating as project partners?

Below is a sample executive summary adapted from a successful Fiscal Year 2001 grantee's application.

> "The National Council on the Aging will develop a nation-wide, online service that enables older people as well as their family caregivers and community organizations that serve them to quickly and easily determine their eligibility for federal and state benefits programs. The system, *BenefitsCheckUp*, will include a 50-state database with over 1,000 programs and 40,000 local entry points, allowing users to check eligibility and learn how and where to apply for various programs. In 2002 and 2003, three model communities will participate–the Chicago area, Denver-Boulder area and three rural counties in southern Colorado. In 2003, three additional sites will be selected from areas currently developing the requisite local resources and infrastructure.
>
> The demonstration project will include an array of organizations in rural and urban communities, including local aging services programs, religious social service agencies, neighborhood health centers and Community Action Agencies. The project will target low-income and disadvantaged elderly people, who historically have been intimidated by the complex application process for assistance. Consumers will have free 24-hour-a-day, every day, access to the service directly through the Internet. In addition, participating organizations (including an array of local aging service programs, religious social service agencies, neighborhood health centers and community action agencies) will help guide users through the application process and online tools.

The primary objective of this multi-site demonstration project is to increase the number of older adults in the model communities who are screened and who enroll in needed benefit programs. Over three years, we expect to serve 193,000 older persons in the model communities, including 74,500 low-income elders and help more than 12,000 seniors obtain Medicaid, 15,000 obtain Food Stamps and 4,900 obtain SSI. In addition, we will evaluate the the project will compare results across the various sites to learn more about adoption rates of this new technology by communities and service organizations throughout the United States.

The National Council on the Aging will partner with the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (representing more than 13 national faith-based organizations) and Catholic Charities USA, the National Institute of Senior Centers, and the National Institute of Senior Housing."

E. Instructions for Preparing the Project Narrative

The Project Narrative is your opportunity to convince readers that your project meets the review criteria defined in the *Notice*. It is the one place in the application where you speak in your own voice directly about the goals of your project, how you expect to achieve your goals, the partners you plan to involve, the people affected by the project, and how you plan to evaluate and share what you've learned from your efforts. Before preparing your Project Narrative, you should carefully read the six review criteria described in the *Notice* and review the general suggestions listed below.

- ***Be clear and succinct***. Because of page limitations, you should discuss your project clearly and succinctly. Reviewers are less interested in jargon and exaggeration and more interested in learning what you are proposing and how well you respond to the six review criteria published in the *Notice*.

- ***Find an impartial proofreader***. One of the biggest mistakes applicants make in writing the Project Narrative is to treat each of the review criteria as a separate and distinct writing task. Even though each section of the Project Narrative should correspond to the six review criteria, they should be viewed as stages in a coherent and convincing presentation. Reviewers have frequently noted that various parts of a single narrative appear to have been written by different people, and that no one appears to have read the narrative all the way through to check for spelling mistakes, stylistic inconsistencies, redundancies, factual omissions, and unexplained assumptions. Therefore, before you submit your application to TOP, a good strategy is to let someone who is not familiar with the project, but understands network technology, read and critique the Project Narrative.

- ***Do not use pointers to online resources***. Because World Wide Web pages or other online resources can be altered after the close of the grant round, you cannot use pointers to online resources to augment your application. Reviewers will be instructed to ignore pointers to online resources. If you want to include documentation available on the Internet, you should print the material and include it in your appendix.

- ***Use appendices to expand your presentation***. Please keep in mind that you are writing to a diverse group of readers–independent reviewers, TOP staff, and the NTIA selecting official. You should not assume that the people who are reading your application know any information about you, your organization, your project, or the individuals in the communities you are trying to impact. Use the 27 pages allocated for appendices to expand upon the points you want to discuss in greater detail. To aid in the analysis of your application, reviewers recommend that you reference any appendices in the Project Narrative.

Addressing the Review Criteria

Since reviewers will evaluate your project based on the six review criteria published in the *Notice*, we suggest that you build the sections of your Project Narrative to correspond to the review criteria–Project Purpose, Innovation, Diffusion Potential, Project Feasibility, Community Involvement, and Evaluation. The sections that follow were developed with the assistance of feedback from external evaluators, peer reviewers, and grantees. Each section provides information, suggestions, and examples on how to address the six review criteria.

Please Note: In the program funding priorities section of the *Notice*, TOP describes specific areas of interest. While it is helpful to highlight those aspects of your project that address TOP's areas of interest, an application does not need to address any of the areas to be competitive. Moreover, addressing TOP's priorities is not a guarantee that your application will be selected for funding. NTIA will continue to support a wide range of projects.

ì Project Purpose (20%)

You should use the Project Purpose section to discuss clearly the problem(s) you are trying to solve, the solution(s) you propose, and the outcomes you expect. In writing this section, it is important to describe the underserved community or communities your project targets and demonstrate how your project will affect those communities.[2]

Defining a specific need or problem. A compelling application defines a problem or set of needs that can be addressed through the use of digital network technology. There may be specific economic, cultural, or geographic issues (such as the lack of a skilled workforce, business disinvestment in the area, limited access to high quality medical care, or high unemployment) that will be the focus of your project. In defining a need, you may wish to include baseline data that characterizes the population(s) to be served by the project (e.g., community demographics, income levels, crime rates). Providing baseline data allows you to compare the problem to be remedied prior to project implementation against the results of the project. For instance, if your project is to address the lack of a skilled workforce, you could provide data to describe current skill levels, specific jobs, age, race, gender of the population and provide socio-economic status of the individuals who use the technology.

[2] "Underserved" refers to various groups of people and geographic communities that face technological, economic, physical, linguistic, or cultural barriers.

The following passage is adapted from the Project Purpose Section of a successful applicant:

> "Despite a growing economy and shrinking welfare rolls, over 21 million Americans sought emergency food assistance in 1997. Furthermore, charitable feeding programs across the country report that demand is still rising. In fact, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has documented increased demands for emergency food assistance across the country since 1983 including a 16 percent increase in 1997 alone. While the lines at pantries and kitchens are rising, food waste continues to warrant concern. In a 1997 report, the USDA estimated that 96 billion pounds of consumable food are wasted each year. This includes 5.4 billion pounds at the retail level and 91 billion pounds at the food service and consumer level (Appendix A, page 9). Our organization's goal is to access this recoverable food and distribute it through our network of 188 food banks across the country (Appendix B, page 10) to over 50,000 charitable feeding programs such as food pantries and soup kitchens. This network makes food available to needy adults and children in every county in America, both urban and rural. Hunger in America can be solved. We need to develop the means to access and distribute available food more effectively and efficiently."

Proposing a credible solution that employs network technologies. Next, you should discuss how network technology and information resources will provide your community or organization with a realistic and effective mechanism for addressing the problem(s) you defined in the preceding section. Competitive applications always demonstrate a logical link between the problem(s) they define and the solution(s) they propose. The successful TOP applicant cited on the previous page continues:

> "In order to more fully access available products and more effectively distribute them across the country, we with our food bank partners will undertake *Project Enterprise*. *Project Enterprise* will put in place the tools necessary for food banks in all regions of the country to serve needy Americans better. While the project entails hardware and software components at local food banks, as well as at our national office, we seek funding for the wide area network (WAN) that will enable the coordination of food demands between local food banks, food donors and our national office. This detailed data sharing will help the food bank network more effectively distribute available product to areas with the greatest demand for that product. While local food banks will continue to solicit and distribute food within their service areas, the creation of a WAN will enable a virtual, national warehouse."

Identifying realistic, measurable outcomes that you expect to result from carrying out the project. There should be a compelling reason to believe that the project you propose will make a difference. The nature of that difference can best be described by the outcomes you expect to result from the project. When describing project outcomes, it is helpful to keep in mind the distinction between project *outputs* and *outcomes*. *Outputs* may be thought of as a unit of service or the result of the project's activities, e.g., number of training classes held, number of "hits" to your home page, number of client referrals, or number of sites established. Such data are important because they often lead to the desired or expected outcome(s).

Outcomes, on the other hand, are the benefits derived from the project activity or the consequences of project participation. Outcomes reflect a changed state or condition of your target population or the project beneficiaries, e.g., improved level of literacy, more efficient delivery of social services, or improved emergency services in rural communities.

Your anticipated outcomes should be tied to your problem statement and include a range of measurements that actually help determine that the underlying need has been addressed. When developing your outcomes, some useful questions to consider include: What do you expect to change in your community? Who will be affected? What specific, realistic outcomes do you expect to occur within the grant award period? Looking beyond the grant award period, what longer term effects that you can expect to occur? The following passage is adapted from the TOP applicant cited above:

> "This virtual warehouse will affect local communities, service providers, and food donors in several important ways. First, local, regional, and national food solicitation can be tailored to meet individual community needs. The data stored in the virtual warehouse will enable effective resource sharing so that no community will be overlooked when there is available food to meet those needs in another location. Second, when a donor offers a specific item on the network, the network will help recipients respond to the offer in a timely and efficient manner. This timeliness will strengthen donor-recipient relationships and will encourage future donations. Specific goals for the project include: (1) a 10% reduction in the time needed for food recipients to identify and receive food donations; (2) demonstrated cost savings for service providers and food donors; and (3) a significant reduction in food spoilage in storage facilities. For more details on our anticipated project outcomes, please see the evaluation matrix in Appendix C, pages 13 - 15."

Targeting Underserved Communities. An important element of your Project Purpose is a description of the underserved community you propose to help. Reviewers will assess the challenges the community or communities face and the degree to which your project will benefit them. Therefore, you should consider presenting a profile of the community or communities to be served and the intended beneficiaries of the project, citing supporting statistics (e.g., per capita income, percent of households living in poverty, population density, size of the region, prevalence of health problems) and their source as appropriate.

To bolster your presentation, you can use specific quantitative data to document the nature and extent of the community's needs. For example, if you purpose to address hunger, you could provide a sample of the annual statistics on the level of hunger in the specific communities where the project will be piloted. You may also wish to append materials such as maps and other geographical representations to illustrate the scope of the project.

í <u>Innovation (20%)</u>

Once you have established what you intend to do, you should describe the innovative aspects of your proposed project. As discussed in the *Notice*, innovations can take many forms, such as projects that involve imaginative partnerships, the introduction of new business processes designed to offer more effective services, demonstrations of new network applications, untested strategies for overcoming access barriers, or new techniques that transform inter-organizational relationships.

You should describe in detail the aspects of your project that are unusual or innovative. Simply stating that a particular approach has not been tried in your community is only a start. Each application should provide insight on the use of digital network technologies that can be shared with the rest of the nation. Therefore, it is helpful to place your efforts in a national context by comparing and contrasting your project to other efforts or projects in your field. Successful applications have researched case studies, various reports, and the activities of TOP grantees and other projects and documented how their project complemented and built on what has been learned. Reviewers encourage applicants to clearly state what you expect others in the field would learn from your project.

In order to gain a better understanding of current uses of information infrastructure, you should use the Internet and other resources to search for comparable efforts and projects. As a start, TOP's web site, accessible via <u>http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top</u>, contains descriptions of over 530 grantees' projects, project narratives from our 1999 through 2001 grant recipients, links to projects funded in previous grant rounds, 36 detailed case studies, and other reports.

In the past, successful applicants have used the resources above to discuss specifics of how their proposed project compared with and differed from existing projects and efforts. Successful applicants often cite specific elements of comparable projects. A successful TOP applicant provided the following discussion of innovation in their application:

> "The Portland Area Housing Clearing House will utilize emerging broad bandwidth technology to link housing agencies with a continuum of housing resources that are updated regularly by project participants. The Portland Area Housing Clearing House builds upon the success of other housing-related projects like the Cleveland Housing Network by providing comprehensive information about available housing and services through an interactive system structured around barriers to stable housing. Many communities, including Portland, currently use network technology to house basic information and referral systems. This project moves beyond information and referral systems to provide state and local government employees and their clients new tools for problem-solving and case work management. From our survey of housing authority networks in five different states (please see Appendix D, page 21 for a brief description of each these projects), the proposed Portland Area Housing Clearing House is unique in that it will speed users into and through the system of services by making needed appointments, searching for appropriate housing, and assisting with problem assessment and solution."

î Diffusion Potential (20%)

In this section, you have an opportunity to identify those aspects of your project that enable its adaptation to or replication by other communities, and the plans you have to ensure that the lessons learned from your project are shared as broadly as possible.

To establish the diffusion potential of your project, you can highlight elements of your project that enable its replication. You may want to discuss how prevalent the problems or needs you hope to address are common to other communities. If many communities face the same problem, the likelihood that they would be interested in your approach is increased. For example, if you propose to address local needs for the underfed in your community, you should identify how acute hunger is in other communities across the country.

You may also want to highlight those aspects of your project that are improvements upon existing approaches. For example, if your project is proposing to use high-resolution video streaming over the Internet for training, you could note the advantages streaming video has for the learning process as compared to video conferencing systems that use fixed, dedicated network connections.

In terms of making a case for the ease of replication, you can highlight the cost-effectiveness and simplicity of your approach versus other alternatives. You can also discuss the aspects that make your solution accessible to other communities, especially underserved communities constrained by geographic, physical, or financial barriers.

In this section you should also discuss plans for *actively* sharing information about your project. Such plans may include presenting at professional conferences, workshops, and symposia; hosting regional conferences; spending time at sites in other locations to aid in their adaptation of your project; publishing findings in professional journals, reports; or creating a World Wide Web site which describes the project and provides a "how-to" guide for others. Since reviewers will also assess the degree to which you dedicate sufficient resources for the activities you propose, you should clearly describe the staff time or resources dedicated to dissemination in your Budget Narrative.

Often your partners, especially organizations with national reach, can assist in your dissemination. It is helpful to specify the groups and organizations you will target for dissemination. In addition, you should name of the publications, journals, and associations you intend to use for dissemination purposes.

L **Tip from Grantees**: Grantees have commented that it is helpful at project outset to develop (and share with your partners) a communication plan that will make it easier to demonstrate the value of the service to other community stakeholders.

ï **Project Feasibility (15%)**

Once you have clearly and systematically demonstrated that the project you propose can serve as an innovative model, you should demonstrate that your team can actually do it. In this section, you should show how you will carry out your project by discussing the following issues:

Technical Approach. You should describe in detail the technology that you will employ in your project, your rationale in selecting this particular technology, and how the various components will be organized and work together.

You should try to be as specific as you can in this section so that there will be no confusion among the reviewers as to what the technology you are proposing will do and how it will work. Often the easiest way to communicate a technical approach is to append diagrams and other pictorial materials that allow reviewers to "see" what you are describing.[3] In order to understand how your project will build on the existing resources, TOP reviewers recommend that applicants describe the network technologies, resources, and services currently available to the end users.

When discussing the technical approach, you should specify in detail not only how the proposed technical and organizational system will work, but also (1) how it will operate with other systems; (2) the technological alternatives that you have examined and the reason why you consider the approach you have chosen superior to others; (3) your plans for maintaining and/or upgrading the system; and (4) how it will grow to accommodate additional users.

(1) *Interoperability* is the condition achieved among communication systems when information (i.e., data, voice, image, audio, or video) can be easily and cost-effectively shared across equipment; acquisition, transmission, and presentation technologies; and services. With respect to interoperability, you should describe as concretely as possible how your system will, or could, work with other relevant networks or services. For example, if you are planning to deploy a network that will be used to transmit medical images among several institutions, you should describe how your network will be integrated with other information systems at those institutions, or elsewhere in the community. You should also discuss your use of standards, and if you have chosen any proprietary, "closed" solutions when standards-based solutions are available, you should provide justification.

(2) With respect to *technical alternatives*, you should describe why the technical approach you propose best meets your goals. It is helpful to explain to reviewers what alternative approaches you considered. Your project should take advantage of existing infrastructure and commercially available telecommunications services, or if this is not the case, you should clearly discuss the extraordinary circumstances that require the construction of new network facilities.

[3] Materials that support or amplify the Project Narrative, such as technical diagrams, organizational charts, maps, or letters of support, can be included in appendices. Please note that there is a 27 page limit on appendices.

(3) You should also describe your plans for *maintaining the system* you deploy and for future upgrades of the technology (if applicable).

(4) *Scalability* refers to the ability of a system to accommodate a significant growth size (i.e., new services provided or additional end users served) without the need for substantial redesign. On the issue of scalability, you should discuss how the system you intend to deploy can accommodate growth beyond the scale defined for the grant period. This growth could be a growth in the number of users within the community, a growth in the geographic area to be served, or a growth in the services that will be offered with the system (i.e., discuss the capability to add services to those that will be provided initially).

Applicant Qualifications. In developing this section, you have an opportunity to provide evidence that the applicant team has the ability to deal effectively with both the technical complexity and the organizational challenges associated with managing the project. When describing your organization's and partners' qualifications, it is helpful to show that all team members have both the commitment and experience necessary to undertake the project and complete it within the proposed time schedule. You should address all of the participants' experience with digital network technology projects, serving the communities or populations targeted by the project, and project management. You may want to include *brief* biographical sketches of the key project personnel from both partner organizations and your own in the appendices. In many cases, you will hire individuals to fill positions once the grant is awarded. If that is the case, it is helpful to append a description of the qualifications of the people you seek to fill those positions.

Budget. Reviewers will carefully examine all the budget materials to assess whether the budget is appropriate and clearly related to the tasks you propose in the Project Narrative. You can use this section to provide a *brief* overview of your budget. One common error in presenting budgets noted by reviewers in previous rounds is the inclusion of only one budget category in the application. Reviewers look to see if budgets include all the necessary categories to support the project. Therefore, you should not present a budget for equipment without funds for personnel, software, training, system support, etc. Suggestions on how to complete your budget presentation can be found in section F. on page *Guidelines - 20*.

Implementation. Reviewers will carefully examine your application to ensure you allow enough time for the project to be developed, carried out, and fully evaluated during the grant period. In previous years, reviewers have strongly recommended that applicants carefully estimate the time required to conduct a project and complete a *thorough* evaluation.

Reviewers also encouraged applicants to present an implementation schedule that identifies major project tasks and milestones. If space is a concern in the Project Narrative, you can append a timeline.

L **Tip from Grantees**: Data collected from TOP grantees show that a commonly reported problem is the underestimation of the time and resources needed to complete particular project tasks. Grantees recommend that you develop a realistic time line that allows sufficient time to correct errors, trouble shoot, and deal with unexpected obstacles.

Privacy. You should discuss your plans for protecting the privacy of the end users and beneficiaries of the project. For example, if you are proposing a project dealing with individually identifiable information (student grades, medical records, etc.), you should describe in detail both the technological mechanisms you will employ to maintain system security and prevent unauthorized access to information. In addition, you should discuss the policy mechanisms (e.g., staff education and usage guidelines) to deter improper use of the network. If you believe that privacy and confidentiality are not important issues in your project, you should state so clearly and discuss your reasoning.

Sustainability. To be competitive, a project should exhibit economic and organizational viability beyond the grant period. You should therefore present a credible plan that includes a discussion of anticipated ongoing expenses and potential sources of non-federal funds to sustain the project. You may also want to address the question of whether you expect start-up partners and their responsibilities for various segments of the project to remain the same or change over time.

L **Tip from Grantees**: Grantees note that staff turnover can harm a project in many ways. At the minimum it can delay a project's progress. If the problem persists, the loss of key staff can severely impede a project's ability to keep pace with end-users demand. Grantees recommend that project staff remain aware of the potential for staff turnover and devise creative methods for overcoming the high cost of maintaining computer specialists and other essential personnel.

ð Community Involvement (15%)

Once you have presented a coherent and convincing discussion of the project and shown that what you propose is feasible, you will want to show that the communities to be served by the project support it and will participate in its development. In this section, you should discuss your partners, the steps you have taken and will take to involve the community (or communities), and your plans for involving and supporting the project's end users. In addition, to the greatest extent possible, you should work to understand the needs and requirements of all potential end users, including those with disabilities.

Partnerships. You should present a clear discussion of who your partners will be, what their respective roles in the project will be, what benefits each expects to receive, and what specific contributions each partner will make to the project in the form of financial support, equipment, personnel, or other resources. You should also describe plans for maintaining the partnerships during the grant.

Partnerships should be clearly defined, mutually beneficial, and the commitments (including both cash and in-kind contributions) well documented in the application. It is helpful to append letters of commitment from your partners that describes in detail their roles and quantifying their contributions or memoranda of understanding.

L **Tip from Grantees**: The experiences of the grantees surveyed for case studies demonstrate the importance of ensuring that the grant recipients' and partners' roles are mutually agreed upon and put in writing in advance of project inception. This generates project support and commitment on the part of all stakeholders and provides a guide for implementation.

If you have worked with these partners on projects in the past, it is helpful to discuss the nature and results of those projects and the project responsibilities assumed by each collaborator. Never assume that reviewers will know who a proposed partner is, what that partner is capable of or willing to commit to the project, or why the partner wants to help.

L **Tip from Grantees**: Grantees repeatedly comment on the importance of developing alliances with organizations that are capable of performing their assigned roles. They suggest that applicants take the time to learn the limitations of their proposed partners, and that they select partners that can clearly devote the necessary time and resources to the project.

Obtaining and sustaining community involvement. In explaining the involvement of your community in the project, you will want to describe the steps you have taken to include a wide variety of community stakeholders in the planning and development processes. For example, have you held open meetings, conducted surveys, used focus groups, met with representatives of different community groups, or developed a steering committee or advisory panel that involves end users and other key stakeholders? Letters from potential end users indicating how they intend to use the proposed services and describing the benefits that they envision are often very persuasive.

L **Tip from Grantees**: Among grantees visited for case studies, the most successful involved community stakeholders in their design and development phases. The inclusive approach contributed to technology initiatives that met the needs of (and were therefore used by) their intended beneficiaries. Conversely, projects that failed to involve stakeholders and end users often found themselves struggling to gain community support.

The following passage describes a successful applicant's approach to involve its community.

> "As we considered the scope of the project, we started with the assumption that the community had diverse ethnic, racial, and economic populations. We also assumed that the community needed better communications to overcome a general feeling of low self-esteem because of crime, joblessness, poor housing, and lack of a sense of community.
>
> "To test our assumptions, the staff surveyed local churches, libraries, business groups, and local press to determine which local organizations and community leaders would make the best partners for the project. We then met with the partners and community organizations to discuss strategies for seeking community input, and to establish project goals and objectives within the timetable once the assumptions were confirmed. We concluded that the best way to do this was for the partners and community organizations to disseminate information to community residents explaining who the partners were, and what the proposed project was about. Subsequently, we created a needs assessment survey and carried out door-to-door surveys. Additionally, we invited the residents to attend a series of five

focus group sessions in their neighborhoods. One hundred sixty-five members of the community attended these meetings. They represented all segments of the community. Most of the assumptions about community needs and the demand for the proposed services were confirmed in the survey and focus group results. Copies of the surveys and a summary of the focus group discussions are attached in Appendix D on page 15."

Support for end users. A competitive application will include detailed description of the needs, skills, working conditions, and living environments of the targeted end users. You should identify and describe the end users. You should also discuss how you will work with them to ensure that they can use the services that the project will enable. How have they been involved in the design of the project? How will they be recruited? How will they be trained? How will you provide ongoing technical support?

> L **Tip from Grantees**: Grantees suggest that the need for training on the use of new systems and technologies is constant and is often more than they originally anticipated. They recommend allocating enough resources to cover the cost for training time, materials, and trainers that can work directly with the trainees. Some grantees also found that integrating instructional activities into normal work duties (rather than offering training on a voluntary basis or as an additional requirement) to be a helpful approach.

Reviewers suggest that applicants discuss how the end users will interact with the technology and get support through your efforts. One way of describing this interaction is to offer a scenario of how the services will be used. For example:

"Bob Jones, an elderly patient, arrives at the emergency room complaining of a chronic cough. A preliminary diagnosis reveals evidence of tuberculosis. As part of our system, an automated tuberculosis protocol recommends appropriate antibiotics, further tests, and an isolation room. A message is sent over the network to the city Department of Health, reporting that a likely case of tuberculosis has been found. After two weeks, the patient's fever and cough have subsided. The physician contacts the department electronically to arrange for him to be followed by the Department for Directly Observed Therapy; with his permission, relevant clinical data are transferred electronically to the department. Since the patient is unable to attend the public health clinic, a public health assistant visits him and uses a hand-held computer to report on his condition. His condition can be tracked over a period of months, and subsequent diagnoses can be made, using the same hand-held device. When Mr. Jones is well enough to visit the public health clinic, he can access the tuberculosis information kiosk in the waiting area, which will provide valuable information related to his condition. To support his use of the system, a trainer will spend up to 5 hours teaching Mr. Jones to navigate the screens. The trainer will also be available to answer technical support calls from 8-5 P.M., Monday through Friday."

ñ Evaluation (10%)

Under Project Purpose, you were asked to offer a realistic estimate of your project outcomes. Here is your opportunity to present a clearly defined plan to evaluate the degree to which the project achieves these outcomes.

As indicated in the *Notice*, your application should include provisions for a final evaluation report on the project that will be completed by an independent evaluator or team of evaluators. The independent evaluator(s) must be individual(s) outside the direct reporting structure of your organization. In other words, while a subordinate of your staff would not qualify as an independent evaluator, a representative from another department or office would qualify as an independent evaluator.

Given the importance TOP places on evaluation, you should clearly identify in the Budget Narrative the amount of money and time allocated for conducting evaluation activities. Reviewers will assess whether you have provided sufficient resources and expertise to evaluate your project thoroughly. Although evaluation plans are highly dependent on the specifics of the project, **evaluation experts recommend that you allocate approximately 10% of the total project budget for these efforts**.

Preparing a competitive evaluation is more than simply allocating a percentage of your budget to contract for an independent evaluation. In order to respond to the evaluation criterion, you should discuss at least the basics of your overall research design and methodology. Some helpful topics to consider as you build your evaluation are listed below.

- **Evaluation Questions**: What questions will the evaluation seek to answer? What do you expect to learn from your project? These questions should tie directly to the outcomes mentioned in your Project Purpose. The project goals, implementation plan, and anticipated outcomes provide the basis for formulating evaluation questions. As you develop your evaluation plan, place yourself in the position of the recipient of your final evaluation report and ask yourself what questions you would like to have answered.

- **Evaluation Strategy**: What approach will you take to find answers to the evaluation questions? If you include a formative evaluation, how often will evaluation reports be provided to you? What populations will be included in your evaluation? How will you collect baseline data on these populations? Will you have a control group? Will you study implementation differences across various sites?

- **Data Collection**: What kind of measurement instruments will be used? Will there be a mix of quantitative and qualitative data identified and collected? At what points in the project will information be collected? A data collection plan helps readers understand when and how you will collect information over the course of the project. It would also be helpful to explain how information will be collected from the various project sites and end users.

- **Data Analysis**: How will you analyze data? These techniques should be appropriate for the types of data to be collected. For example, open-ended interview schedules often require extensive and careful coding of responses and tend to employ qualitative analyses.

- **Evaluator(s)**: Specify the individuals or groups who will be involved in conducting the evaluation. Describe the qualifications and responsibilities of key personnel involved with the project evaluation, both internally and externally.

> L **Tip from Grantees**: Grantees recommend that applicants involve an evaluator early in the development of designing the project and preparing the application. Responding to our evaluation studies, many of the grantees indicated that, in hindsight, they would have benefitted from giving more thought to evaluation at the outset of their project.

Your evaluation should provide timely feedback that helps you to manage your project more effectively, and it should yield valid and reliable results and information that you can use to sustain or enhance your project.

To help you develop your evaluation plans, TOP has created an Internet resource that contains descriptions and links to valuable assessment and evaluation information including exemplary evaluations from previous grantees, case studies, reports, and evaluation guides. The evaluation guides are especially helpful because they provide worksheets and simple, clear exercises on how to integrate program planning, evaluation, and program implementation for greater success.

To access the evaluation resources described above, go to TOP's web site (accessible via http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top) and follow links to Research and Evaluation. If you don't have Internet access, please contact the TOP office.

Research Involving Human Subjects. Any evaluation conducted as part of a TOP-funded project must conform to existing federal regulations involving human subject research. The federal government defines "research" broadly to encompass the study of human behavior, reactions, thought processes, and study of the human body. In your evaluation section, you should clearly indicate one of the following:

- your project does not involve human subjects research,

- your project research involves human subjects, but the research will likely be eligible for an exemption from Institutional Review Board approval, or

- your project research involves human subjects, and you either have or will seek approval of the research evaluation from an Institutional Review Board.

To learn more about human subject research requirements, please see Appendix I.

F. Instructions for Preparing a Budget Request

Building a budget request is more than an exercise in completing the required forms. Your budget narrative is a description of the resources you propose to complete your TOP project in the time period you specify. Your budget should include all the eligible costs needed to complete your project. You can use grant funds to pay for personnel to manage the project, to purchase software and hardware, to contract with an evaluator, etc.

Reviewers have been instructed to analyze your budget carefully. As part of the Project Feasibility criterion, reviewers will rate you on the extent to which your budget is **clear**, **cost-effective**, and **consistent** with the objectives and tasks described in your Project Narrative. Accordingly, you should not design your budget based on the maximum amount of money you can request from TOP. Rather you should create a budget that details the activities and costs appropriate to the tasks proposed in your Project Narrative. In addition, you should provide enough detail on each cost so that reviewers can easily understand the relationship of items in the budget to your Project Narrative.

Your budget presentation should detail costs over the entire duration of the project. In the past, some applicants have mistakenly provide only their annual costs and have failed to total the costs over the full two to three years. The following sections will help guide you through the process of preparing a budget.

Identifying Eligible Costs

In order for the reviewers and program staff to evaluate your budget, you should fully explain each budget item. The budget must be reasonable for the tasks proposed, and the relationship of items in the budget to the Project Narrative, especially the project objectives, should be clearly defined and communicated.

TOP will support most costs associated with your project. TOP allows costs for personnel; fringe benefits; computer hardware, software, and other end-user equipment; telecommunication services and related equipment; consultants and contractual services; travel; rental of office equipment, furniture and space; supplies, etc. that are allowable under the applicable cost principles. The only cost category specifically excluded is construction costs (see the Eligible Costs section of the *Notice*).

A chart of the applicable Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars is provided on the following page. These and other OMB circulars are available from the OMB web site at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html.

Organization Type	Refer to the Cost Principles in...
Universities and colleges	OMB Circular A-21, *Cost Principles for Educational Institutions*
State, local, or federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; public schools; city and county libraries; etc.	OMB Circular A-87, *Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments*
Community-based organizations, libraries, private K-12 institutions, museums, etc.	OMB Circular A-122, *Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations*
Research and development groups within hospitals	Appendix E of 45 CFR Part 74, *Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to R&D under Grants and Contracts with Hospitals*

Listed below are items that have proven problematic for grant applicants in the past. If, after reading this section, you still have questions regarding any of the items, please contact a member of TOP staff.

Construction Costs: As stated in the *Notice*, costs associated with the construction or major renovation of buildings are not eligible.

Discounts: The value of products or services you include in your budget must reflect the fully discounted price of that item to your organization. For instance, if you can receive a 70% discount on computer equipment, then the value of the equipment should appear in the budget as the actual amount you will pay (i.e., 30% of the total pre-discount cost of the computer equipment). In addition, you cannot use the discount on an item or service as an in-kind contribution from the provider.

Professional Services: It is important to distinguish between: (1) personnel costs, such as project management, network engineering, and training, associated with the *development or maintenance* of a network; and (2) costs associated with *professional services*, such as teaching, counseling, or medical care, that will be delivered over the network that your project will create. Personnel costs associated with development or maintenance of a network are eligible; payment for ongoing professional services is not eligible. For example, if the project is to create a telemedicine network, the costs of setting up and maintaining the network are eligible, but payment for the time or services of physicians or other health professionals providing care over the network is not an eligible cost.

Restrictions on Funds: In previous years, the legislative authority to award TOP grants placed restrictions on eligible costs for applicants which are recipients of Universal Service Fund discounts (also known as "e-rate" discounts) and applicants receiving assistance from the Department of Justice's Regional Information Sharing Systems Program (RISS) as part of the project costs. In Fiscal Year 2001, the statute stated:

> *That notwithstanding any other provision of law, no entity that receives telecommunications services at preferential rates under section 254(h) of the Act (47 U.S.C. 254(h)) or receives assistance under the regional information sharing systems grant program of the Department of Justice under part M of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796h) may use funds under a grant under this heading to cover any costs of the entity that would otherwise be covered by such preferential rates or such assistance, as the case may be.*

Accordingly, recipients of the above-described preferential rates or assistance were prohibited from including any costs that would be covered by such preferential rates or assistance in their proposed TOP grant budget. For example, if you were an entity eligible to receive a discount on network line charges under the Universal Service Fund, you could use neither federal funds nor matching funds to cover the cost of the network line charges.

Because the rules of both the Universal Service Fund and RISS programs are subject to change at any time, we encourage you to refer to the appropriate agencies to learn eligibility requirements and the availability of discounts.

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) is a private, not for profit organization and is responsible for providing every state and territory in the United States with access to affordable telecommunications services through the Universal Service Fund. Public and private schools, public libraries, rural health care providers are eligible to seek discounts for communications services from the Universal Service Fund. For further information, the USAC maintains a home page at http://www.universalservice.org/.

The RISS Program is funded by the Department of Justice's Bureau Of Justice Assistance (BJA) and offers information sharing and data analysis on criminal activity, telecommunications and investigative support, and specialized equipment sharing. For further information, the BJA maintains a home page at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/.

Because final Fiscal Year 2002 appropriation details were not available prior to the printing of the *Guidelines*, for any change to these rules you should refer to NTIA's *Notice of Availability of Funds*. The *Notice of Availability of Funds* will be published in the Federal Register and posted on TOP's web site once a Fiscal Year 2002 appropriations bill is signed into law.

Paying for Eligible Costs–Federal Funds, Matching Funds, and Program Income

As discussed in the *Notice*, TOP grants are matching grants. TOP will provide up to 50% of the total project cost unless extraordinary circumstances warrant a grant of up to 75%. When the grant award is made, you are committed to the share of the total project cost proposed in the application. Therefore, be sure that all matching funds proposed in an application are allowable, achievable, and defensible.

If you plan to request federal funds that exceed 50% of the total project cost, you should use the Statement of Matching Funds to explain fully your reasons for the request and to provide appropriate supporting documentation.

It is also important to remember that the **same administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements apply to the use of both federal funds and the funds and contributions provided as the non-federal share.** Therefore, if an item is not eligible to be supported with federal funds, it cannot be supported with matching funds.

Matching Funds: You may use matching funds to pay for any eligible item in your budget. Matching funds may be in the form of cash or in-kind donations. The federal government defines in-kind contributions as non-cash donations by a third party to a project that may count toward satisfying the non-federal matching requirement of a project's total budget.

You cannot count an item or a service as an in-kind contribution simply because it has value. In general, an item or service may be documented as an in-kind contribution only if it is: (1) an allowable project expense, (2) donated to the project, and (3) used to meet the project objectives.

In general, in-kind contributions might include the following:

- Donated equipment, computers, telecommunications facilities. **Please Note**: If your organization is planing to utilize equipment or resources for which it does not hold legal title, you cannot count the full purchase cost as a match. The contribution must be accounted for according to the "use value" of the item. For more details on the "use value," please see OMB Circular A-122, *Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations*. An illustration of the "use value" calculation is also provided in the sample Budget Narrative in Appendix II.

- Commitments of time from individuals outside the applicants organization directly contributing to the project including consultants, engineers, programmers, software engineers, systems support, etc.

- Contributions of services from organizations such as telephone companies, network access providers, Internet Service Providers, satellite companies, cable television operators, etc.

Program Income: In some instances, as part of your project, you may want to generate income that can be used as matching funds. As indicated in the *Notice*, any program income generated by a proposed project is subject to special conditions and needs to be identified appropriately in the Budget Narrative, Standard Form 424, Statement of Matching Funds, and the Standard Form 424A. All program income generated by the project must be used to pay for items included as part of your budget. If you are offered a grant, the Department of Commerce will identify in a special award condition that program income will be allowed as matching funds.

If you plan to assess fees for web access, for training services, for software usage, conference attendance, etc., you must indicate the estimated amount to be generated and the category you wish to allocate the funds. Program income must be spent in furtherance of the project; it cannot be accumulated during the course of the project or spent on other, non-project-related expenses. Similarly, if unanticipated program income is realized during the course of the project, it must be spent on project-related items. Program income must be recorded on your Budget Narrative, Statement of Matching Funds, Standard Form 424A, and Standard Form 424. Suggestions on how to detail program income are provided below.

In the **Budget Narrative**, you should describe program income in the cost category where the funds will be used. For example, if you charge a fee for web site access and the fees will be completely allocated to web site maintenance, you should include your explanation of program income in your description of web site maintenance. See example below.

Category	Description of Budget Item	Federal	Matching	Program Income	Total
Other	**Telephone service for help desk**. 12 months @ $25 per month, for a total of $300.	$ 300	$ 0		$ 300
	Onsite Volunteers. One local volunteer will provide data entry. The volunteer will work 20 hours a week for 18 months. Based on our research of local labor market, the value of the volunteer's efforts is $5.00/hour. The total value of the volunteer's services is $ 7,200.	$ 0	$7,200		$7,200
	Network Maintenance. We estimate that routine system maintenance, tape backups, and system trouble shooting will cost $2,400. Each of the 20 users expected to use the system will be assessed an access fee. The fee will be $10 per month per user for 12 months, for a total of $2,400. All program income generated will be used to pay for system operating expenses.	$ 0	$ 0	**$ 2,400**	$2,400
	Regional Conference Materials. In year 2, we will host a regional "Lessons Learned" conference. The cost of handouts, name badges, and coffee for 250 attendees at Regional Lessons Learned Conference are estimated at $20 per person for a total of $5,000. A $10 registration fee will be charged to defray the costs of attending and the remaining costs will be paid for with federal funds.	$2,500	$ 0	**$ 2,500**	$ 5,000
	Total Other Costs	$2,800	$7,200	$4,900	$14,900

On the **Statement of Matching Funds**, you should create a line item for anticipated Program Income.

On the **Standard Form 424A**, you should use column (3) in Row 6 for Program Income. Please indicate the sum of program income in the appropriate cost categories in rows a through h. Although it is redundant with item 6. k. column (3), you should also fill out the total program income generated by the project in line 7, column (3). Please see example below.

Sample Standard Form 424A

Section B for a project that includes program income:

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION, ACTIVITY			Total (5)
	(1) Federal	(2) Non-federal	(3) Program Income	
a. Personnel	$ 30,000	$ 22,500	$	$ 52,500
b. Fringe Benefits	8,550	6,413		14,963
c. Travel	963	963		1,926
d. Equipment	17,998	24,000		41,998
e. Supplies	375	375		750
f. Contractual	9,900	20,000		29,900
h. Other	2,800	7,200	**4,900**	14,900
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	71,936	78,401		150,337
j. Indirect Charges	12,126	12,230		24,356
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i & 6j)	$ 154,648	$ 172,082	$ **4,900**	$ 331,630
7. Program Income	$	$	$ **4,900**	$

On the **Standard Form 424**, you should include the total amount of program income generated and allocated to the project in Section 15, f. Please see example on the following page.

Sample Standard Form 424
Section 15 for a project that includes program income:

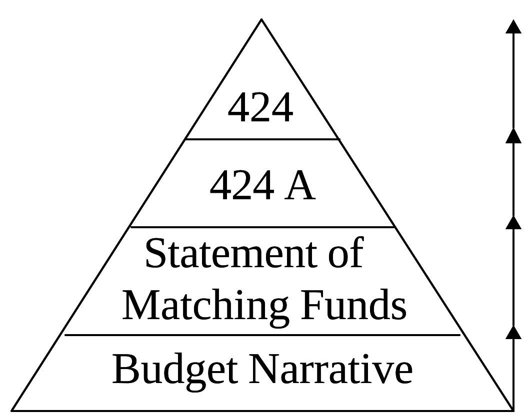
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING:		
a. Federal	$	**154,648**
b. Applicant	$	**170,081**
c. State	$	0
d. Local	$	0
e. Other	$	**2,001**
f. Program Income	$	**4,900**
g. TOTAL	$	**331,630**

Preparing Your Budget Documentation and Forms

TOP requires that applicants submit three documents to support the budget request: a Budget Narrative, a Statement of Matching Funds, and a Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information–Non-Construction Programs.* In addition, the Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*, requires you to estimate total project funding.

Based on advice from current grantees, TOP recommends that you develop the Budget Narrative before you prepare your Statement of Matching Funds and your Standard Forms 424A and 424.

Constructing your budget documentation is like building a pyramid. Rather than starting your budget by requesting the maximum amount, you should detail all the costs required to conduct your project. The costs should directly support the activities you described in your Project Narrative. You should then detail the costs in your Budget Narrative. The Statement of Matching Funds builds from the Budget Narrative by summarizing who will provide the matching funds. The SF 424A abstracts the totals for the categories you described in the Budget Narrative. Finally, the sum of the categories in the SF 424A are transposed to the SF 424.



Budget Narrative

The Budget Narrative is required for all applicants and should reflect the costs for the duration of the project, not a single year. As noted above, the *clarity* with which you present your budget information is a factor that reviewers will consider when examining your application. TOP grantees find it helpful to use a spreadsheet when creating the Budget Narrative to ensure that the total amounts are added correctly. Please round your figures to the nearest whole dollar. A sample Budget Narrative is provided in Appendix II.

Each item, service or contribution should be accounted for in one of six budget cost categories (Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Equipment, Supplies, Other, Indirect). You may use federal funds and matching funds (or any combination of both) to pay for eligible items in your budget. Each of the cost categories is explained in further detail below.

Personnel

Only the salaries of the applicant organization's staff should be placed here. For clarity, you should list each staff position for which expenses will be claimed, by name and/or by position title. Each listing should contain: (1) the position's expected level of effort (e.g., 75%, or 30 hours per week); (2) the duration of the position's involvement (e.g., 18 months), (3) the position's base salary or wage rate (e.g., $35,000 per year, $12 per hour); and, (4) a description of the activities to be performed by the person in that position for the proposed project.

Salaries contributed by partner organizations should be listed in the "Other" cost category.

Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits of staff from the applicant organization should be placed here. This section should include only the fringe benefits such as health insurance, social security, workers compensation, and retirement benefits, that apply to the personnel claimed in the section on personnel costs.

If fringe benefits are included in the organization's overall indirect cost rate, then they should not be included in this section, but presented with "Indirect Charges." Costs for fringe benefits are typically expressed as a percentage of the base salary or as actual costs. Applicants should describe the benefits included in the total fringe calculation.

Travel

TOP will support travel costs directly related to the project. Any travel you or your partners require as part of your project can be included in this category. Travel expenses must be itemized and calculations shown in detail. You should provide a clear description of the intended travel and demonstrate that the proposed travel is necessary to the eventual success of the project. Consultant travel costs should be described in the "Contractual" section, not here.

For air travel, the origin, destination, and the estimated air fare should be included. Lodging expenses should include the nightly rate and the number of nights. Meals should be broken out on a per day or per meal basis, as appropriate. If you plan to present at a conference, the location and proposed date should be provided. Automobile travel should include a standard mileage rate and estimated mileage.

Equipment

Equipment typically includes computer and telecommunications hardware that is purchased during the project. All expected equipment purchases should be itemized in this section. If detailed information (such as the manufacturer and model number or configuration details) is available, it should be included. However, exhaustive detail is not required. Each equipment item (or set of items) should be described and justified. If you receive a grant, you will need to maintain an inventory of any equipment purchased as part of the grant.

In accordance with OMB Circular A-110, the Federal government considers any item that is purchased for $5,000 or more to be equipment; all items purchased for less than $5,000 are "supplies." Therefore, if you plan to purchase computers, laptops, modems, routers, etc. as part of the grant, and each unit costs less than $5,000, you should include them in the "Supplies" cost category.

When calculating the value of a particular piece of equipment, it is important to determine which organization will have title to the equipment. If you as the applicant purchase the equipment and maintain title, than the purchase price of the equipment can be allocated to the project. If however, title is held by a partner organization, you may only count the depreciated or "use" value of the equipment.[4] The sample Budget Narrative in Appendix II contains an example of a use value calculation in the "Supplies" category.

Supplies

In accordance with OMB Circular A-110, the Federal government considers supplies to be all items purchased for less than $5,000. Therefore, if you plan to purchase computers, laptops, modems, routers, etc. as part of the grant, and each unit costs less than $5,000, you should include them in the "Supplies" cost category. If detailed information, such as the manufacturer and model number or configuration details, is available, it should be included. However, exhaustive detail is not required. Each item (or set of items) should be described and justified. To the extent practicable, costs for any needed office supplies including paper, pens, printing cartridges, CDs and other recordable media should be itemized.

[4] Please note that there are several methods to calculate the "use" value of an item. See the depreciation and use allowance sections of the relevant OMB Circulars.

Contractual

All contractual services, including services provided by individual consultants, lease arrangements on equipment, etc. should be described in this section. Each service should be described in detail and conform to competitive procurement rules in accordance with the appropriate OMB Circulars. The costs should be explained and justified.

Any proposed **sole source procurement** for $100,000 or more under the award must be stipulated and a complete sole source justification must be provided. The sole source justification should be based on the unique nature of the contractor service. It may be that the contractor provides the only hardware or software that is compatible with your system. It may be that a specific vendor may be the only one able to deliver the item or service in a timely way. The sole source provisions of these *Guidelines* also apply to all contracts, including those with individual consultants. Familiarity with the vendor, or past performance is not adequate justification for a sole-source contract.

Other

Traditionally, the "Other" category includes the costs (e.g., space rental, volunteer contributions, advertising costs, software licenses) that don't fall into the categories listed above. However, all costs must be itemized–miscellaneous or contingency costs are not allowed. Each item must be justified and its relationship to the project's completion explained. For staff time contributed by partners, salary and fringe benefits can be combined as a single cost.

Indirect Charges

The amount of indirect charges allocated to the budget is based on your "indirect cost rate." Your organization may already have an indirect cost rate negotiated with a federal agency. That rate may be applied to your TOP grant if it is current. If it is not current, it must be updated. The old rate may still be applied to the TOP grant, with the understanding that the new negotiated rate will apply if an award is made and as long as the total indirect costs do not exceed the dollar amount authorized in the line item budget of the award.

In this section of the Budget Narrative, you should explain how the indirect rate is applied to the direct costs. In the simplest case, the indirect rate is a percentage that is applied to the total of all direct costs (both Federal *and* matching funds). However, some organizations apply indirect costs only to certain categories of direct costs, in which case an explanation of how the total amount is derived is helpful. **If you have a negotiated indirect cost rate, a copy of the agreement must be attached to the Budget Narrative**.

If you do not have a negotiated rate, but would like to include indirect costs, you should estimate your indirect rate and include it in your budget request. Typically, if an award is made, the applicant will have ninety (90) days from the award start date to submit documentation needed to establish a rate with the federal government. Please note, if the subsequent negotiated rate is lower than the estimated rate in the budget, you will be held to the lower rate in your award.

It is important to note that, in some instances, contracted service expenditures include indirect charges as part of the cost. Indirect costs for contracted services should be included under the "Contractual" section in the Budget Narrative, not under the "Indirect Charges" section. The "Indirect Charges" section should only include indirect costs to be charged.

The table below offers guidelines for placement of specific items in your Budget Narrative.

Item	Category
Applicant staff time	Personnel
Travel costs for a partner to attend focus group meetings	Travel
New computer equipment purchased by applicant for $5,500	Equipment
Mainframe purchased 2 years ago for $8,000 that will be used by partner (Note: the amount used as match must be calculated at the "use" value)	Equipment
Laptop purchased 2 years ago for $3,750 that will be used by partner (Note: the amount used as match must be calculated at the "use" value. For an illustration on how to calculate this item, see Appendix II in the sample Budget Narrative section on "Supplies.")	Supplies
Grantee purchased computer costing less $2,500	Supplies
Leased photocopier	Contractual
Charges for telecommunication services, such as data lines or Internet access	Other
Charges for information services, subscriptions to on-line databases	Other
Telephone charges, postage, photocopying and printing needs	Other
Office space	Other
Advertising and/or publicity expenses directly related to the project	Other
Licenses for operating system software	Other
Volunteer time	Other
Partner's staff time and benefits	Other

Statement of Matching Funds

The Statement of Matching funds is required of all applicants. The Statement of Matching Funds is a tool to help reviewers and TOP staff understand who will pay for or contribute the items and services identified in the Budget Narrative.

If you request more than the standard NTIA share of 50% of the project cost, you should use the Statement of Matching Funds to explain fully your reasons for the request and provide appropriate supporting documentation.

All funds listed in the Statement of Matching Funds must correspond **exactly** to cost items discussed in the Budget Narrative. With respect to in-kind donations, it is essential to remember that an item which is not eligible for federal support **cannot** be included as a match. You should indicate whether the funds will be available at the time of award or they are to be collected at a later date. Finally, if the funds are to be raised through mechanisms such as service or registration fees or other anticipated program income, this should be documented as described on page *Guidelines - 23*. A sample Statement of Matching Funds for the applicant "Carry Forward" appears below.

Statement of Matching Funds

Carry Forward's contributions
As the applicant, *Carry Forward* will contribute:

$64,089 in salary and fringe for the project director and admin support
$ 720 for travel
$ 6,375 for supplies
$20,000 for contractual costs
$34,800 for other costs
$10,000 in indirect charges

Total *Carry Forward* contribution: $135,984

Other Contributions
Worker, Inc. will provide one welfare-to-work volunteer for 20 hours per week for 18 months, at $5.00/hour. The total value of this contribution is $7,200.

Webspectrum will donate 100 hours of web development worth $10,000.

CompuDonate will provide name badges and materials for 125 attendees at the Regional Lessons Learned Conference valued at $1,250.

Total contributions from others: $ 18,450

424A-7

Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information–Non-Construction Programs*

This form is required for all applicants. Please make sure that the figures and totals on the form are consistent with the numbers in your Budget Narrative and SF 424. **Please note**: You only have to complete the front page of the form, sections A - B; **leave sections C - F blank**.

For Fiscal Year 2002, TOP has online tools available on its web site that can generate the Standard Form 424A. The online form has self-correcting features and automatically totals each item to ensure accuracy. If you create the form online, you must print it and include it with your application. **TOP will not accept the electronic submission of this or any other form or information**. To access the tools, please see TOP's web site at http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top. If you plan to fill out the form by hand, instructions are provided below.

SECTION A–BUDGET SUMMARY

Line 1: Enter the total funds requested from NTIA on line 1, column (e). Enter the amount of non-federal funds, including those from the applicant, state or local governments, or other non-federal sources, on line 1, column (f).

Enter the sum of columns (e) and (f) in column (g).

Leave columns (c) and (d) blank

Lines 2-4: **Leave blank**

Line 5: Enter the same amounts entered on line 1.

SECTION B–BUDGET CATEGORIES

Column (1): Enter the NTIA request for each budget category. Note that the total entered in 6. k (1) should equal the amount entered in 1 (e) from Section A. The total should also equal the amount entered in section 15. a of your SF 424.

Column (2): Enter the non-federal contribution for each budget category. The total entered in 6. k (2) should equal the amount entered in 1 (f) from Section A. The total should also equal the sum of sections 15. b - f of your SF 424.

Columns (3), (4): **Leave blank**, unless you anticipate program income.

Column (5): Enter the sums of columns (1) and (2).

Line 7: **Leave blank**, unless you anticipate program income.

SECTIONS C–F **Leave blank**

A sample front page of Standard Form 424A (sections A-B) is shown on the following page.

SAMPLE

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

OMB Approval No. 0348-0044

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. NTIA/TOP	11.552			$149,629	$154,434	$304,063
2						
3						
4.						
5. TOTALS		$0		$149,629	$154,434	$304,063

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
a. Personnel	$36,000	$49,875			$85,875
b. Fringe Benefits	$10,260	$14,214			$24,474
c. Travel	$1,926	$720			$2,646
d. Equipment	$19,998	$0			$19,998
e. Supplies	$18,375	$6,375			$24,750
f. Contractual	$18,800	$20,000			$38,800
g. Construction					$0
h. Other	$3,045	$53,250			$56,295
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a - 6h)	$108,404	$144,434			$252,838
j. Indirect Charges	$41,225	$10,000			$51,225
K. TOTALS (sum of 6i - 6j)	$149,629	$154,434			$304,063
7. Program Income					

G. Instructions for Completing Additional Standard Forms

This section provides information on how to fill out the following Standard Forms:

- Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*
- Standard Form 424B, *Assurances*
- CD-511, *Certification*
- SF-LLL, *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities*

Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*

Required for all applicants

Standard Form 424 is required by the Office of Management and Budget as a facesheet to all applications for federal assistance. It asks for information about your organization and your project. Failure to submit a complete Standard Form 424 with an original signature may result in the rejection of your application.

For Fiscal Year 2002, TOP has online tools available on its web site that can generate the Standard Form 424. The online form has self-correcting features and automatically totals each item to ensure accuracy. If you create the form online, you must print it and include it with your application. **TOP will not accept the electronic submission of this or any other form or information.** To access these tools, please see TOP's web site at http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top.

Below are box-by-box instructions about how to fill out Standard Form 424:

Box 2: Enter the date on which the application is being submitted.

Box 3, 4: Please leave blank.

Box 5: In the section labeled "Legal Name," enter the **legal name of the organization** that is applying for a grant. **Do not** enter the legal name of the individual who is applying on behalf of the organization.

In the section labeled "Organizational Unit," enter the name of the department, division, or other organizational unit that will perform the proposed project. For example, the legal name may be the "ABC County Hospital," and the organizational unit may be the "Department of Information Services."

In the section labeled "Address," **please enter a street address if possible, not a post office box number**. Also, please remember to include the name of the county–it is used for administrative purposes.

In the section labeled "Name and Telephone," please include an electronic mail address, if available, of the contact person.

Box 6: The Employer Identification Number (EIN) is assigned by the Internal Revenue Service. Every employer should have one.

Box 7: Enter the most appropriate letter in the box. If you are a non-profit organization to which none of the labels applies, please enter "N" for "Other" and type in "Non-Profit." **Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply.**

Box 11: On the first line of this box, enter a **descriptive title** of the project. **Do not enter a summary of the project**.

Box 12: List the cities and/or counties affected by the project. If a project is statewide or involves multiple states, please list only the states. If a project is nationwide in scope, please enter "nationwide."

Box 13: In the section labeled **"Start Date," enter the date "10/01/02"** the official start date of all awarded projects. Note that the project may begin at any time after the application deadline, but applicants should read the caution about premature obligation of funds.

In the section labeled "End Date," enter the date on which the project will terminate. This date may not be more than 36 months from the date entered as the start date.

Box 14: In the section labeled "Applicant," enter the state and district number, e.g., "Nebraska - 2." **Do not** enter the name of the Congressional representative. **Only one district** should be listed; it should correspond to the address of the applicant listed in Box 5.

In the section labeled "Project," enter the state (or states) and the Congressional district (or districts) that will be directly affected by the project.

Box 15a: Enter the funding request from NTIA for the entire duration of the project.

Box 15b: Enter the estimated funding (both cash and in-kind contributions) to be provided by the applicant.

Box 15c: Enter the estimated funding (cash and in-kind contributions) to be provided by a state government or governments. If the applicant is a state government entity, enter the estimated funding in Box 15b as an applicant contribution, and leave this box blank.

Box 15d: Enter the estimated funding (both cash and in-kind contributions) to be provided by a local government or governments. If the applicant is a local government entity, enter the estimated funding in Box 15b as an applicant contribution, and leave this box blank.

Box 15e: Enter the estimated funding (both cash and in-kind contributions) to be provided by other sources (e.g., foundations, private sector contributors).

Box 15f: Leave blank, unless you anticipate generating program income.

Box 15g: Enter the total of Boxes 15a - 15e.

Box 16: **DO NOT** check the box next to "program is not covered by E.O. 12372."

TOP is covered by Executive Order 12372, and all applicants are required to submit a copy of their application to their state Single Point of Contact (SPOC). **The United States Office of Management and Budget maintains an up-to-date listing of all state SPOC on the White House web site at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html**. Applicants should indicate the date on which a copy of the application was submitted to the state SPOC office. If the application is from a state that does not have a SPOC office or if a state has for some reason declined to review the application, check the box next to "or program has not been selected by state for review."

Box 17: Unless your organization is delinquent on a federal debt, **be sure** to check "No." If your organization is delinquent on a federal debt, explain the circumstances on a separate sheet attached to this form.

Box 18: Enter the name, title and telephone number of someone who is authorized to commit the applicant organization. Have the authorized representative sign the form in **blue ink** so the original signature can be distinguished from the copies. Do not forget to date the signature.

See Sample Standard Form 424 on the following page.

OMB Approval No. 0348-0043

Application for Federal Assistance

2. DATE SUBMITTED
March 19, 2002

Application Identifier

1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION:

Application	*Preapplication*
Q Construction	Q Construction
} Non-Construction	Q Non-Construction

3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE

State Application Identifier

4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY

Federal Identifier

5. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Legal Name
<Organization Name>

Organizational Unit
<department, division, etc.>

Address *(give city, county, state, and zip code)*
<street address>
<city, state, zip>
<county>

Name and telephone number of the person to be contacted on matters involving this application *(give area code)*
<contact name>
<telephone number>
<email address>

6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):

1 2 — 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: *(Enter appropriate letter in box)* N

A. State
B. County
C. Municipal
D. Township
E. Interstate
F. Intermunicipal
G. Special District
H. Independent School District
I. State Controlled Institution of Higher Education
J. Private University
K. Indian Tribe
L. Individual
M. Profit Organization
N. Other *(specify)* non-profit

8. TYPE OF APPLICATION:

} New   Q Continuation   Q Revision

If revision, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es):   Q   Q

A. Increase Award   B. Decrease Award   C. Increase Duration
D. Decrease Duration   E. Other *(specify)*:

9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY:

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

10. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 11.552

TITLE: **Technology Opportunities Program**

11. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:

"Carry Forward's Rural Online Project"

12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT *(cities, counties, states, etc.)*

<names of cities, counties, etc.>

13. PROPOSED PROJECT:

Start Date	Ending Date
October 1, 2002	September 30, 2004

14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS OF:

a. Applicant	b. Project
<state>-3	<state>-3,5,7-9

15. ESTIMATED FUNDING:

a. Federal	$	149,629
b. Applicant	$	135,984
c. State	$	0
d. Local	$	0
e. Other	$	18,450
f. Program Income	$	0
g. TOTAL	$	304,063

16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?

a. YES THIS APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:

DATE March 19, 2002

b .NO ☐ PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372

☐ OR PROGRAM HAS NOT BEEN SELECTED BY STATE FOR REVIEW

17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?

☐ Yes If "Yes," attach an explanation   ■ No

18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT. THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.

a. Typed Name of Authorized Representative	b. Title	c. Telephone Number
<authorized representative's name>	<title>	xxx-xxx-xxxx

d. Signature of Authorized Representative	e. Date Signed
<authorized representative's signature>	March 19, 2002

Standard Form 424B, *Assurances*
Required for all applicants

The Department of Commerce requires that all applicants provide assurance that they are eligible to receive federal assistance and that they will comply with applicable federal regulations.

An original signature is required on the back page of form 424B, *Assurances*. Include the date the form was signed. This form should be signed by the same person that signs the Standard Form 424.

CD-511, *Certifications*
Required for all applicants

The Department of Commerce requires that all applicants certify that they are complying with certain conditions put on the award of federal assistance.

An original signature is required on the back page of form CD-511, *Certifications*. Include the date the form was signed. This form should be signed by the same person that signs the Standard Form 424.

SF-LLL, *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities*
Required only for those applicants who engage in lobbying Congress or the federal government on behalf of their application

This form is used to disclose any lobbying activities in which the applicant is engaged on behalf of the application.

The filing of the form is required for each payment or agreement to make a payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the application.

The instructions for completing Standard Form LLL are provided on the back of the form.

Appendix I. Human Subjects Research

Based on previous experience, most TOP applications involve human subjects (e.g., project staff, end users, beneficiaries, partners) as part of the evaluation. Federal policy defines a "human subject" as an individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains:

- data through intervention or interaction with an individual (e.g., videotaping people, observing children using new software, surveying personnel regarding a new delivery of service to a client); or

- information through patient records, a company's customer data, web use logs, etc.

For a more detailed overview on human subject research, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Human Research Protection provides a helpful guidebook on their web site at http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/irb/irb_guidebook.htm.

If your project involves human subjects, you will need to submit your research procedures, proposed protections, and research or evaluation instruments to an Institutional Review Board (IRB) that has been approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services maintains an up-to-date listing of approved IRBs at http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/assurance/cfed-a-c.htm.

TOP recognizes that most applicants will not have the full details of their evaluation available for submission to an IRB prior to the March 21 deadline. Therefore, TOP allows applicants to request a deferral of IRB approval of an evaluation.

Some research efforts involving human subjects, including most of the evaluations proposed by TOP applicants, may be eligible for an exemption from IRB approval. All eligible exemptions for research and evaluations involving human subjects are listed in Part 27 of Title 15 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Common Rule for Protection of Human Subjects. Exemptions described in 15 C.F.R. § 27.101(b) that typically apply to evaluations proposed by TOP applicants include:

- Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

- Research involving the use of educational tests cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

- Research, involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available, or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Below is a checklist that can be used to determine if human subjects are involved in a research project, and if the research does involve human subjects, whether it may be exempt under current Department of Commerce regulations. The Department of Commerce regulations are available online at http://www.doc.gov/oebam/gforms.htm.

1. Is there an intervention or an interaction with a living person that would not be occurring but for this research? Examples: video taping people, observing children using new software, surveying personnel regarding a new delivery of service to a client, etc.

__ Yes - Human Subjects are involved. Go to Question 3.

__ No - Go to Question 2.

2. a. Will data/information/specimens collected originally from people or about people be used in this research? Examples: broadcast video, web use logs, medical information, survey questions.

__ Yes - Identifiable human subjects may be involved. Go to Question 2.b.

__ No - Go to item 6. It appears that human subjects may not be involved in the project. However, an exemption determination may be required. Please review Question 3 for additional information about research that may require an exemption determination.

b. Does that information contain private information in a form in which the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained from the information? Examples: medical records, donor name or address, sales transaction records.

__ Yes - Identifiable human subjects are involved. Go to Question 3 to see if an exemption may apply. If you know that an exemption does not apply proceed to Question 5.

__ No - Go to Question 3. The research may not be within the scope of 15 CFR Part 27, however, it may require an exemption determination to be made due to the use of data, recordings, or specimens that could be linked to humans without appropriate safeguards.

3. Do you think the research may either not be within the scope of 15 CFR Part 27 or qualify for an exemption under 15 CFR 27.101 (b)? The following questions will help you evaluate whether an exemption is applicable.

a. Will the task involving human subjects only use existing data, recordings (audio or visual), or specimens? Examples: patient records, a company's customer data, web use logs.

__ Yes - Go to 3.d.

__ No - Go to 3.b.

b. Will the evaluation plan involve normal educational practices such as instructional strategies or comparison of instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods? Examples: observation of student-teacher interactions, video of instruction.

__ Yes - Go to 3.d.

__ No - Go to 3.c.

c. Will the evaluation or research involve educational tests (i.e., cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior. Examples: user satisfaction surveys, observation of staff usage.

__ Yes - Go to 3.d.

__ No - Go to 3.d.

d. Do any of the data, recordings, specimens, or practices/procedures involve a protected class? Protected classes include: Prisoners, children, and pregnant women. Examples: testing educational software with children, surveys of obstetric patients.

__ Yes - Go to 5, this research is probably not exempt and will need an Institutional Review Board (IRB) review.

__ No - Go to 3.e.

e. Are the data or recordings (audio or visual) publicly available? Note: Publicly available may include items for sale, items that are freely available to the public, or items that reside in the public domain. Examples: customer data sets, donations of pathological specimens, shareware.

__ Yes - Go to 4, this research may be exempt under 15 CFR 27.101(b).

__ No - Go to 3.f.

f. Will the data or recordings (audio or visual) be stripped of all identifiable information that could be linked to a human subject prior to being received by the investigator?

__ Yes - Go to 4, this research may be exempt under 15 CFR 27.101(b).

__ No - Go to 3.g.

g. Will information be recorded by the investigator in such a way that it can be linked to the human subject? Examples: web use logs tied to e-mail address, patient records that include patient identifiers.

__ Yes - Go to 5, this research is probably not exempt and will need an Institutional Review Board (IRB) review.

__ No - Go to 4, this research may be exempt under 15 CFR 27.101(b).

4. YES, an exemption under 15 CFR 27.101(b) may apply to the proposed research or evaluation. Please indicate in the evaluation section of your Project Narrative that your project involves human subjects research, but the research will likely be eligible for an exemption from Institutional Review Board approval.

5. NO, an exemption probably does not apply to the proposed research or evaluation. Please indicate in the evaluation section of your Project Narrative that your project involves human subjects research, and you either have or will seek approval of the research from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) if awarded a grant. If you are unable to obtain IRB approval prior to March 21, 2002, simply indicate in your Project Narrative in the Evaluation Criterion that you will seek a deferral of IRB approval if awarded a grant. *Please Note*: Some evaluations involving children may be exempt. If the principal investigator(s) on the evaluation team do not participate in the direct observation of public behavior of children, then the exemptions listed in Appendix II of the *Application Kit* are allowable.

6. IT APPEARS THAT HUMAN SUBJECTS ARE NOT INVOLVED IN YOUR RESEARCH. Please indicate in the evaluation section of your Project Narrative that your project does not involve human subjects research.

Appendix II. Sample Budget Narrative

Appendix II; Sample Budget Narrative
(Can Be Created in a Spreadsheet)

Category	**Description of Budget Item**	**Federal**	**Non-Federal**	**Total**
Personnel				
Project Director	The Project Director will oversee all aspects of the grant. Responsibilities will include ensuring that budget and timetable targets are met, selecting contractors, putting together an advisory committee, preparing project reports, and supervising the project staff. The Project Director will work 50% of the time for 24 months. Based on an annual salary of $30,000, the cost to the project will be $30,000.	$0	$30,000	$30,000
Administrative Assistant	An administrative assistant will be assigned for the duration of the project. The assistant will work 75% of the time for 18 months. Based on an annual salary of $26,500, the cost to the project will be $19,875.	$0	$19,875	$19,875
Project Coordinator	Our organization will hire someone to work with all partners and stakeholders. The Coordinator will be assigned 100% of the time to the project for the first 12 months and 50% for the remaining 12 months. Based on an annual salary of $24,000, the total project cost will be $30,000.</td	$36,000	$0	$36,000
	Total Personnel Costs	$36,000	$49,875	$85,875
Fringe Benefits	All Carry Forward's fringe benefits are calculated as 28.5% of base salary. Benefits include health care, Social Security, workman's compensation, short term disability, and retirement benefits. Please note: Figures are rounded to the nearest whole dollar.			
Project Director	Fringe benefits are (28.5% of $30,000)	$0	$8,550	$8,550
Administrative Assistant	Fringe benefits are (28.5% of $19,875)	$0	$5,664	$5,664
Project Coordinator	Fringe benefits are (28.5% of $36,000)	$10,260	$0	$10,260
	Total Fringe Benefit Costs	$10,260	$14,214	$24,474

Travel				
Conference Presentation	In the project's second year, the Project Manager will travel from Akron, OH, to Chicago, IL, to present project findings at the Association for Networking"s annual conference. Round trip airfare is $400. Two nights lodging @ $90 per night is $180. Per diem of $50-a-day for meals, for total of $100. Ground transportation $40.	$720	$0	$720
Help, Inc. Trainer	Our partner, Help Inc. will provide a trainer who will make 6 round trips to each of the 12 sites to conduct training classes for a total of 72 trips. Based on an average of 40 miles round-trip driving at our organization"s standard rate of $0.25 per mile, the total cost is $720.	$0	$720	$720
Hosting a Regional Conference	The Project will fly in 2 project directors from Durham, NH, and Bangor, ME, for a Regional Conference to discuss the lessons learned from the project. The estimated round-trip air fare is $900. Two nights lodging @ $90 per day is $180. Two days of meals at $50 per day is $100. Ground transportation to and from the hotel will be $26. Total cost: $1,206.	$1,206	$0	$1,206
	Total Travel Costs	$1,926	$720	$2,646
Equipment				
Network Server	One (1) GreatServer 2001 network server will be located at the project headquarters. The server will be the repository of the local information files and will manage the electronic mail communication among the sites. The server will have at least a 10 GB hard drive, 128 MB of RAM, and a magnetic tape drive for backup purposes. Cost: $14,498.	$14,498	$0	$14,498
Network Router	A network router will be located at the headquarters of the site. The router will manage communications with the external network and cost $5,500.	$5,500	$0	$5,500
	Total Equipment Costs	$19,998	$0	$19,998

Supplies				
General Office Supplies	Paper, pens and pencils, computer disks, laser printer cartridges, staplers, file folders, etc. are estimated at $750.	$375	$375	$750
Personal Computers	One (1) personal computer will be installed at each of 12 sites for public access to the network. Each computer will be configured with at least 128 MB of RAM, a 500 MHz processor, 6 GB hard drive, and a modem and will cost $1,500. 12 units at $1,500 is $18,000 total.	$18,000	$0	$18,000
Laptop Computers	One (1) laptop will be available for the project coordinators at each of the 12 sites. These laptops were purchased in Jan. 1999 for $3,750 per unit. The use value of the laptops will be calculated using the federal use allowance on existing equipment: (12 units) x (6.666% per year)×(the acquisition cost of $3,750)×(the 2 year period of use) for a total of $6,000.	$0	$6,000	$6,000
	Total Supplies Costs	$18,375	$6,375	$24,750
Contractual				
Network Installation and Maintenance	A vendor will be competitively selected to install and provide 12 months of ongoing maintenance for the project"s network. Installation will include the assembly and configuration of the public access computers, the server, the router, connection to network circuits, and overall system testing. Based on inquiries to local vendors, it is estimated that 100 hours, at $75 per hour will be required for the installation and a 24-hour response maintenance contract is estimated at $200 per month. Total cost: $9,900.	$9,900	$0	$9,900
Independent Evaluation Consultant	An evaluation consultant will be competitively selected to work with project staff to provide ongoing assessment support and project monitoring. The selected consultant will refine the evaluation plan, design the evaluation survey instruments, collect and analyze evaluation data, and prepare the final evaluation report. It is estimated that the consultant will work for 35 days in Year 1 and Year 2 at a rate of $400 per day. Total cost: $28,000.	$8,000	$20,000	$28,000
Photocopier	A copier will be leased for 18 months @ $50 per month for a total of $900.	$900	$0	$900
	Total Contractual Costs	$18,800	$20,000	$38,800

Other				
Telephone Service for Help Desk	12 months at $25 per month, total is $300.	$300	$0	$300
Website Development	Webspectrum will contribute 100 hours of development time for website development to the project. Webspectrum charges $100 per hour for this type of work for a total value of $10,000.	$0	$10,000	$10,000
Onsite Volunteers	One welfare-to-work volunteer will work as a data entry clerk. The volunteer will work 20 hours per week for 18 months. Based on our research of local labor market, the value of the volunteer"s efforts is $5.00/hour. The total value of the volunteer"s services is $ 7,200.	$0	$7,200	$7,200
Help, Inc. Trainer	Our partner, Help Inc., will contribute the time of one staff member to help train users to access the system. The trainer will work 20% of the time for 1.5 years. The trainer's salary and benefits are $70,000 per year. The total value is $ 21,000.	$0	$21,000	$21,000
Software for Network Server	The network server will require a single license of each of the following software packages in order to run the community network: CoolMail mail handler: $1,000 Manage-My-Net network management software: $495	$1,495	$0	$1,495
T-1 Circuit	Each of the five sites currently pay on-going multiple line charges for T-1 service to connect to an Internet service provider. After discount, the cost of the leased T-1 service for five (5) sites is $460 per month. Total cost per site for 12 months is $27,600. The Information Systems Division at the central site estimates that 50% of the traffic on the network during the 2 year grant period will be exclusively dedicated to project activities. Therefore the total value of the leased T-1 service as a contribution to the project is $13,800.	$0	$13,800	$13,800
Conference Materials	Handouts and name badges for estimated 250 attendees at Regional Lessons Learned Conference are estimated at $10 per person for a total of $2,500.	$1,250	$1,250	$2,500
	Total Other Costs	$3,045	$53,250	$56,295

Total Direct Charges	The Sum of All the Direct Cost Categories.	$108,404	$144,434	$252,838
Indirect Charges	The Southern Regional Rehabilitation Center applies an indirect cost rate of 22% to all direct cost categories except equipment. A copy of the Southern Regional Rehabilitation Center"s current negotiated indirect cost rate with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is attached. Total Direct Charges (except Equipment): $252,838-$19,998 = $232,840. Therefore Total Indirect Costs @ 22% * ($232,840) are $51,225.	$41,225	$10,000	$51,225
	Total Project Costs for the Two-Year Duration of the Project	**$149,629**	**$154,434**	**$304,063**

Appendix III. Application Forms

This section contains the following application forms needed to complete a TOP application:

- Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*
- Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information–Non-Construction Programs*
- Standard Form 424B, *Assurances*
- CD-511, *Certification*
- SF-LLL, *Disclosure of Lobbying Activities*

Please use photocopies of these forms for your application and save the original copies for use in case the TOP requests revisions during its review.

For Fiscal Year 2002, TOP has online tools available on its web site that can generate the Standard Form 424 and Standard Form 424A. The online forms have self-correcting features and automatically totals each item to ensure accuracy. If you create the forms online, you must print them, sign in the appropriate locations, and include them with your application. **TOP will not accept the electronic submission of any forms or other information.** To access these tools, please see TOP's web site at http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top.

In addition, TOP maintains links to copies of blank forms in PDF format on its web site that can be printed and used in your application. If you need additional copies of forms or materials, you may also contact the TOP office.